

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) In a computer network that includes a scheduling server computer, a plurality of business computing systems logically connectable to the scheduling server computer, and a plurality of customer computing systems logically connectable to the scheduling server computer, Aa method of configuring the scheduling server computer so that it may be used by any of a plurality of the business computing systems for different types of business entities for scheduling appointments to do a particular job as configured by an operator at any of the business computing systems, the method comprising the steps offor:

(a) ~~prior to receiving input regarding a desired time for starting the particular job, wherein the particular job is comprised of a plurality of services performed by one or more resources, and for each job for which an appointment is to be scheduled using the method,~~ receiving at the scheduling server computer operator input from any of the business computing systems of the different types of business entities, the operator input comprising data that identifies for a particular business entity specifying eachone or more services provided by that business, data that identifies a time dependency of each service needed to perform a particulareaach job, and data that identifies a resource dependency of each service needed to perform each job, and

wherein the time dependency comprises a length of time required to perform the service, and

when the service depends on the prior performance of other related dependencies on other services, the time dependency includes a length of time for performing those prior related services, and

wherein at least some services needed to perform the particular job must be carried out either sequentially or in parallel;

the resource dependency comprises an listing of the resources required to perform the service;

(b) ~~prior to receiving input regarding a desired time for starting the particular job,~~ receiving at the scheduling server computer operator input from any of the business

computing systems for the different types of business entities, the operator input comprising data that identifies for said particular business entity specifying a time availability of each resource that can be used to perform each service needed to perform each job;

(c) ~~at a time before the appointment to do the particular job is actually scheduled,~~ the scheduling server computer thereafter using the data input from said operator to automatically creating for each particular business entity which has input data for configuring the scheduling of its jobs, a plurality of proposals for each business entity that specify when each job as configured by the operator for each business entity might be scheduled during a defined time period, the plurality of proposals being created as a function of the time availability of each resource that can be used to perform each service needed to perform each job and the time dependency of each service, and

wherein at least one resource and at least one service can be included in any number of the plurality of proposals at a same time availability,

each proposal indicating a time instance at which each job can be initiated during the defined time period, and

wherein each job can be have a plurality of associated proposals;

(d) after the plurality of proposals for each business entity have been created by the scheduling server computer, either a business computing system or a customer computing system logging onto the scheduling server computer and inputting data which identifies receiving the input specifying a desired time for starting an the appointment to do the a particular job by a particular business entity;

(e) based upon the input data identifying the desired time for starting the appointment to do the particular job by the particular business entity, the scheduling server computer automatically selecting one of the plurality of proposals that are associated with the particular job that was created prior to the input specifying a desired time for starting the appointment, in order to use the selected proposal to make an appointment for doing the particular job by the particular business entity;

(f) the scheduling server computer then automatically associating the corresponding resources required for the selected proposal with the appointment and then

tagging the resources so that thereafter they are identified~~ing the resources~~ as being unavailable for other proposals used by the particular business entity; and

(g) the scheduling computer then automatically revising one or more other~~the plurality of proposals in response to said one of the plurality of proposals being selected~~ proposal used to make an~~said~~ appointment for doing the particular job at the particular business entity, the revising of the one or more other proposals including,

revising the one or more other proposals so as to remove from the one or more other proposals any ~~for which~~ of the tagged resources are no longer available due to making the appointment for doing the particular job at the particular business entity, and

eliminating any of the one or more other proposals from among the plurality of proposals for which proposals cannot be revised due to the tagged resources no longer being available.

2. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 1, further comprising ~~at the step~~ for associating the selected proposal with a customer for whom the job is to be done.

3. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 1, wherein the step ~~for~~ automatically creating the plurality of proposals comprises ~~at the steps~~ for automatically searching each of the services needed to perform the job to identify an availability of each block of time that is:

- (a) sufficient in duration to perform the service; and
- (b) for which resources required to perform the service are available.

4. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 3, further comprising ~~at the step~~ for associating a job identification with each block of time that is thus identified.

5. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 3, further comprising ~~at the step~~ for splitting a block of time into pieces, to define a proposal having a split time interval in which the job can be performed.

6. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 1, further comprising ~~at the step~~ for receiving operator input assigning different priorities to at least some of the resources, so that a resource assigned a lower priority is used prior to a resource assigned a higher priority, when selecting said one of the plurality of proposals to schedule the appointment.

7. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 1, wherein the step ~~for~~ receiving operator input comprising data that identifies for said particular business a ~~specifying the time~~ availability of each resource includes ~~at the step~~ for specifying any block of time in which a resource is unavailable to perform a service during the defined time period.

8. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 1, wherein the step ~~for~~ automatically selecting one of the plurality of proposals that are associated with the particular job comprises ~~at the step~~ for balancing usage of the resources that can be used to perform the services needed to perform the job.

9. (Cancelled)

10. (Cancelled)

11. (Cancelled)

12. (Cancelled)

13. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 1, further comprising ~~at the step~~ for receiving input from an operator at a business computing system or from a customer at a customer computing system instructing an appointment to be cancelled, and in response thereto, the scheduling server computer automatically revising the plurality of proposals, to accommodate changes in the time availability of resources that were previously required to perform said one of the plurality of proposals corresponding to the appointment that was canceled, making the resources available for other appointments.

Claims 14 - 48. (Canceled)

49. (New) In a computer network that includes a scheduling server computer, a plurality of business computing systems logically connectable to the scheduling server computer, and a plurality of customer computing systems logically connectable to the scheduling server computer, a computer program product comprising a computer-readable storage media storing computer executable instructions that when executed perform a method of configuring the scheduling server computer so that it may be used by any of a plurality of the business computing systems for different types of business entities for scheduling appointments to do a particular job as configured by an operator at any of the business computing systems, and wherein the method is comprised of steps for:

(a) receiving at the scheduling server computer operator input from any of the business computing systems of the different types of business entities, the operator input comprising data that identifies for a particular business entity one or more services provided by that business, data that identifies a time dependency of each service needed to perform a particular job, and data that identifies a resource dependency of each service needed to perform each job, and

wherein the time dependency comprises a length of time required to perform the service, and

when the service depends on the prior performance of other related services, the time dependency includes a length of time for performing those prior related services, and

wherein at least some services needed to perform the particular job must be carried out either sequentially or in parallel;

the resource dependency comprises a listing of the resources required to perform the service;

(b) receiving at the scheduling server computer operator input from any of the business computing systems for the different types of business entities, the operator input comprising data that identifies for said particular business entity a time availability of each resource that can be used to perform each service needed to perform each job;

(c) the scheduling server computer thereafter using the data input from said operator to automatically create for each particular business entity which has input data for configuring the scheduling of its jobs, a plurality of proposals for each business entity

that specify when each job as configured by the operator for each business entity might be scheduled during a defined time period, the plurality of proposals being created as a function of the time availability of each resource that can be used to perform each service needed to perform each job and the time dependency of each service, and

wherein at least one resource and at least one service can be included in any number of the plurality of proposals at a same time availability,

each proposal indicating a time instance at which each job can be initiated during the defined time period, and

wherein each job can be have a plurality of associated proposals;

(d) after the plurality of proposals for each business entity have been created by the scheduling server computer, either a business computing system or a customer computing system logging onto the scheduling server computer and inputting data which identifies a desired time for starting an appointment to do a particular job by a particular business entity,

(e) based upon the input data identifying the desired time for starting the appointment to do the particular job by the particular business entity, the scheduling server computer automatically selecting one of the plurality of proposals that are associated with the particular job in order to use the selected proposal to make an appointment for doing the particular job by the particular business entity;

(f) the scheduling server computer then automatically associating the corresponding resources required for the selected proposal with the appointment and then tagging the resources so that thereafter they are identified as being unavailable for other proposals used by the particular business entity; and

(g) the scheduling computer then automatically revising one or more other proposals in response to said selected proposal used to make said appointment for doing the particular job at the particular business entity, the revising of the one or more other proposals including,

revising the one or more other proposals so as to remove from the one or more other proposals any of the tagged resources no longer available due to making the appointment for doing the particular job at the particular business entity, and

eliminating any of the one or more other proposals which cannot be revised due to the tagged resources no longer being available.